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Damascus to manufacture rubber boots, canvas and rubber shoes, and felt and rubber shoes by the hot molding process, using imported crude rubber, imported and local waste rubber and canvas, and locally made felt. Production is said to be about 300,000 pairs per year and about 200 workers are employed. Other factories in Damascus and Aleppo produce rubber soles and heels. About 1,600 tons of rubber and rubber waste were imported in 1953, but it is not known how much was used in the boots and shoes industry in addition to local scrap rubber. The importation of boots and shoes is prohibited.

Matches

Syria's first match factory started production in Damascus in 1930. By 1952, six more had been built. Damascus has the three largest, Aleppo the other four. Supplies are drawn mostly from local timber, though some additional wood, as well as chemicals, is imported.

An improved layout of machines and the introduction of small conveyors would increase efficiency and assist in lowering costs.

Together the factories employ about 350 whole or part time workers. The three Damascus factories produced about 25.6 million boxes in 1952 and 32.2 million in 1953. Production figures for the Aleppo factories are not available. The importation of matches is prohibited.

Tobacco

A number of enterprises grade and prepare tobacco for export, but the manufacture and importation of cigarettes and tobacco has, since 1951, been confined to the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration.

The monopoly operates a cigarette factory in Damascus and one in Aleppo, and a factory in Latakia which manufactures and packs tobacco for retail sale. The tobacco for manufacture is partly Syrian (from the Latakia region) and partly imported. Cigarettes, tobacco and cigars are also imported from Europe and the United States.

The Damascus branch is in a new factory where tobacco is sorted, damped, stripped by hand only, and cut. The cigarettes are made on a number of old German machines and a few new American ones.

The tobacco monopoly employs 2,300 workers; total production of all three factories amounted to 2.7 million kg. in 1953.